

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-3802
specter.senate.gov

May 24, 2009

The President
The White House
Washington, D.C.

Dear Mr. President:

I write to you today regarding the Department of Agriculture's reported decision to end the Philadelphia School District's Universal Feeding Program. This program is vital to ensuring that 120,000 students in underserved schools receive free meals without having to fill out paper applications.

While I appreciate the administration's offers of assistance to the Philadelphia School District as it transitions out of the pilot program, the unacceptable result of the transition to paper applications will be children missing meals.

Changes may be necessary to the Philadelphia School District's Universal Feeding program, but the time to debate and consider such changes is during the planned Child Nutrition Act reauthorization, which the Congress is expected to take up later this year. I urge you extend this program in its current form through the 2010 school year, or until the Child Nutrition Act can be reauthorized and implemented.

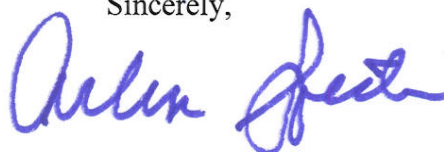
The Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Agriculture, on which I sit, will soon move forward on the Department of Agriculture's Fiscal Year 2010 appropriation. If your administration does in fact intend to end the program this school year, I would appreciate a clear statement to that effect, so that I and others can introduce immediate legislation to extend the program.

Thank you for your attention to this matter which is tremendously important to ensuring that Philadelphia School District children receive proper nutrition which is vital to educational success.

I am writing to you on Sunday of the Memorial Day weekend so that the Pennsylvania delegation can know what action to take. From extensive discussions, I am sure that Senator Casey and the other members of the delegation will join in this effort.

My best.

Sincerely,



Arlen Specter